

# OSAE CAN YOU SEE

Students use OSAE (*observe, speculate, analyze, and, evaluate*) to learn and draw conclusions about Mississippi River locations.

## TEACHER NOTES FOR DISCUSSION

Student introduction exercise:

1. Close your eyes and imagine a large city—either one you recently visited or recall from television or the movies. Picture the city from above, as if you are taking a plane or helicopter tour of the city. Keep your eyes closed and hold that picture in your mind.
2. What kinds of buildings do you see? Are they new or old? fancy or plain? tall or short?
3. Now put yourself down on one of the streets and look at the city from the ground. Look up toward the sky. What do you see?
4. Take a deep breath. What do you smell?
5. Listen closely for the next few seconds. What kinds of sounds do you hear?

Afterwards, take a few minutes to share the students' observations. On the blackboard, have the students put similar observations together and begin to categorize the responses. Students can come up with category titles such as "Skyscrapers," "Noises heard in City," or "Famous Structures."

For another introductory activity, locate one large picture of an urban landscape (e.g., a poster of the Chicago Loop). As a class, complete the stages of OSAE.

## Objective

By the end of this activity, students should be able to observe, speculate, analyze, and, evaluate locations; and, based on this information, draw logical conclusions.

## Time Considerations

Instructor preparation:  
15 minutes

Student activity:  
two or three classes

## RELATED STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS

### History

**Standard 4. Understands the physical and human characteristics of place**

- knows the human characteristics of places
- knows the physical characteristics of places
- knows how technology shapes the human and physical characteristics of places

**Standard 2. Knows the location of places, geographic features and patterns in the environment**

- knows the factors that influence spatial perception

### Commerce/Culture

**Standard 12. Understands the patterns of human settlement and their causes**

- knows ways in which both the landscape and society change as a consequence of shifting from a dispersed to a concentrated settlement
- knows the factors involved in the development of cities

# OSAE CAN YOU SEE

## UNDERSTAND YOUR MISSION

In this activity, you will gather and analyze data to help you read a landscape.

### LEARN THE LINGO

analyze	the breakdown of something complex into smaller parts using logic
evaluate	determine the significance or value of something
landscape	the portion of land that can be viewed at one time
observe	to watch carefully, paying attention to details
reflection	considering an object or idea
speculate	to review something and not come to final conclusion

### Gather Your Supplies

- pictures of Mississippi River places (e.g., postcards, posters, field trip pictures, or magazine cutouts)

## CHART A COURSE FOR EXPLORATION

1. Break up into small groups.
2. Find pictures and postcards of cities and towns along the Mississippi River. To give you a better idea of a place, multiple pictures are helpful. Choose one city to focus in on.
3. Lay out all the pictures you have of your city and refer to them throughout the rest of the activity
4. After you have decided on a city and a picture(s) go through OSAE and answer the questions.

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## Observe

Do a thorough visual observation of the scene. What elements give the city its identity? What features do you see that are common and uncommon to most cities? Why? How do you know this? Record your observations

**Example:** The photographs show big empty-looking warehouses and abandoned railroad tracks.

## Speculate

Look at the elements that compose the observation data. What is it telling you? Why do you think it is like this? What can you gather about the city from the picture? Record your speculations

**Example:** A modern photograph that shows a city with large old abandoned warehouses, and a railroad track leads you to believe that this part of the city once thrived, but is no longer used.

## Analyze

Information such as dates, builders, influences, and changing occupants fit into the analysis of a landscape. It is often necessary to dig deep into library or local sources to discover the answers to the questions that arise from the speculation process. Research and then record your analysis.

**Example:** A trip to the library or state historical society will reveal the history of the area in the picture. You find out when and to what purpose it thrived and why it is now, virtually, abandoned.

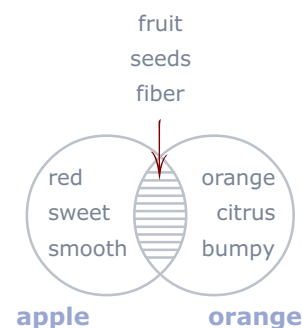
## Evaluate

All landscape analysis questions ultimately come to the questions of evaluation. What can you figure out about this city? Have changes in new technology had an impact on the city? Was this a positive or negative change? How could this landscape be used more productively or more equitably? Write an evaluation.

**Example:** This part of the city used to be part of a booming textile market. Fabrics were brought in by train, sewn into uniforms, and shipped back out of the city by train. A cheaper labor force moved the industry outside the U.S. The city adopted insurance as its main industry and abandoned textiles. Restoration is possible. The old buildings could be converted into loft apartments and grocery stores and the old railroad track could be used for a commuter trolley out to the suburbs where most people now work.

## Go Beyond

Analyze a rural landscape versus a city landscape. Follow the OSAE procedure and then form a Venn diagram to show unique aspects of the urban and rural living. Where the circles overlap, you'll find the traits both have in common.



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For a traditional assessment, have students describe what they learned about OSAE and ways they might use this strategy.

## REFERENCES

—. "Iowa Houses, The Goldfinch Magazine, Volume 2, September 1981.

Eckhardt, Patricia and Todd R. Mozingo. *Context Iowa: How to Look at Your Town*. State Historical Society of Iowa.